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Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

14 February 1985

North Korea: Seeking US Technology

Summary

For years North Korea has actively sought denied US technology through firms in Japan and Western Europe with varying degrees of success. P'yongyang's priorities include electronics equipment such as integrated circuits, computers, and microwave equipment. Recently, North Korea has purchased about 60 US-made helicopters through a West German company.

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P'yongyang's efforts focus heavily on Japanese companies. Japan accounts for 70 percent of North Korean imports from the developed countries. Many Japanese trading companies dealing with North Korea are headed by Korean residents in Japan who are sympathetic to P'yongyang. Over the past several years, P'yongyang has approached Japanese firms to obtain various types of US-made equipment, including computers, integrated circuits, microwave receivers, boat engines, and radar systems.

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This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Korea Branch, Northeast Asia Division, Office of East Asian Analysis, at the request of the International Security Affairs, Office of the Secretary of Defense. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to Chief, Korea Branch at [redacted]

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Firms in Switzerland, Austria, the United Kingdom, West Germany, and France are other important sources of US technology. P'yongyang has sought computers, microwave equipment, microphotometers, measuring instruments, oscillators, and smelting equipment in these countries. [redacted]

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